LIBRARY OF HEAVEN'S PATH

C1311 - King of Destruction (2)

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"This…" Chen Leyao's eyebrows shot up as an ominous premonition arose in her mind.

If she recalled correctly, all that supposed King of Destruction did was destroy a formation. But what Zhang Xuan had just done was tear down the entire main hall of the branch…

"Ah?"

While Chen Leyao's expression had turned unnatural, Zhang Xuan was also scratching his head in incomprehension.

Where is the might of the elephants and dragons that we agreed upon?

Where is the indomitable strength that will be difficult for me to withstand that you spoke of?

Just a single palm, and you were already sent flying. Not to mention, you even crashed through the wall. Is it really fine for you to go that easy on an examinee you are assessing?

"You…" Struggling out of a pile of dust, Elder Su's face was so warped that it almost felt as if he would lose his mind.

As an elder invigilating an examination, he had actually been sent flying by the examinee.

More importantly, he had even warned the other party to be careful of the formidable might behind his palm.

Be careful your head!

The one who should be freaking careful is me!

"This… Elder Su, there are still two blows remaining. Actually, I only used a half of my strength in the earlier attack, so…" Zhang Xuan said hesitantly.

"You only used a half of your strength?" Elder Su suddenly wobbled on his feet as he became lightheaded.

"I held back a little when I executed my palm strike earlier," Zhang Xuan explained.

That was not a lie. He did rein in his strength a little.

He would rarely display his full strength in a battle unless he deemed it absolutely necessary to do so. In view of Elder Su's supposed powerful palm strike, he had chosen to face it with his strongest move, Heavenly Demon Great Sorrow Palm, but he had still held back in terms of strength.

On top of that, in order to maximize the might of the Heavenly Demon Great Sorrow Palm, the attack should come down a downward trajectory. In order to capitalize on the speed of the Unbounded Voyager earlier, he could only execute it with a horizontal trajectory, so its strength was further reduced.

"…" Elder Su's lips twitched uncontrollably.

Despite only facing half of the young man's strength, he still nearly ended up crippled.

If the young man had used his full strength in the previous palm strike, would he have lived to see tomorrow's sun?

Are you really sure you are a Leaving Aperture realm primary stage cultivator and not a Saint 7-dan cultivator?

Silence drifted in the air for some time, and unable to endure the suspense, Zhang Xuan spoke up once more. "Elder Su, if you find that I'm still lacking, I'll put in my full strength for the two remaining moves!"

“Cough cough! It’s enough. There’s no need for you to face my remaining two moves. I believe that you wield strength comparable to a Grand Dominion realm primary stage cultivator!” Elder Su quickly waved his hand.

As a formation master, his strength would not be on par with master teachers. Nevertheless, even when suppressing his cultivation, he would still be far stronger than most Grand Dominion realm cultivators. Yet, despite his strength, he had been sent flying with a single palm strike from the young man.

With that alone, there was no need for him to continue with the remaining two blows.

“Thank you, Elder Su!” Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

Since his strength had reached the mark, that meant that he was eligible to take the 8-star formation master examination. Once he succeeded, he would be able to contact Zhao Ya later in the night.

“There’s no need to stand on ceremony,” Elder Su said as he rubbed his two trembling hand together.

He discreetly whipped out a pill, swallowed it, and released the seal on his cultivation; only then did he feel his injuries alleviating slightly. After which, he glanced at the massive crack in the middle of the hall, and his mouth twitched slightly. Just as he was about to find someone to repair it, flurried footsteps sounded, and an elder abruptly barged into the room.

“Old Su, you were right. This time, with the whole lot of us staring at him, that fellow didn’t dare cause damage anymore, and he’s currently challenging the examination obediently. Do you want to take a look as well? It’s not a common sight to see him so calm…” the elder exclaimed in agitation.

Kacha! Kacha!

Before the elder could finish speaking, the crack on the wall suddenly began advancing once more, crawling over the entire ceiling. It seemed that the elder barging into the room and his loud voice had destabilized the condition in the room.

Hualala!

Dust began fluttering to the ground.

The elder who had just entered the room finally noticed that something was amiss, and lifting his head to look at the ceiling, he shrieked in shock, “Ah! What’s that?”

That shriek happened to be the straw that broke the camel’s back. Unable to endure it any longer, the room began to shake intensely.

Boom!

The entire room came crashing down.

Rocks, dust, and everything that was in the ceiling collapsed to the ground. Zhang Xuan and the others hurriedly drove their zhenqi to fend off the falling rubble, and only then were they spared from the calamity.

When everything finally settled down, Elder Su took a look at the complete wreckage around him, and he nearly burst into tears.

It should have been a simple test to assess the lad’s strength, resolved with three simple blows. How did it come to this?

Admittedly, the hall had not been built with durability in mind; nevertheless, as a work of celestial designers, its resilience was not to be underestimated. For several centuries, he had lived here with nary a problem, and even after the previous visits of the King of Destruction, the hall had managed to remain standing. Yet, just by crossing palms with this fellow, the hall had been reduced to such a state.

The more he thought about it, the more stifled Elder Su felt. Eventually, he could not help but direct an accusatory gaze at the standing young man not too far away.

Upon catching sight of the daggers in Elder Su's eyes, Zhang Xuan's hands instinctively shot up and pointed to the elder who had just entered, and he exclaimed in an innocent and indignant voice, "I wasn't the one who destroyed the hall; he did! It has nothing to do with me!"

"…" Elder Su.

"…" The elder who had just entered.

"…" Chen Leyao.

A moment later, the elder swept away a brick on his head and the debris on his shoulders before turning to Elder Su with a look of bewilderment. "Old Su, this is… Just what's going on?"

"It's nothing much. I was in the midst of assessing Zhang shi's strength when in a moment of carelessness…" Hearing the elder's question, Elder Su's face immediately

flushed red. Eventually, he still found himself unable to speak of the exact reason.

He was simply too embarrassed to speak of that matter! Even though he did lower his cultivation to Grand Dominion realm primary stage, the opponent he faced was only at Leaving Aperture realm primary stage! Furthermore, not only was he sent flying, the impact of his crash even caused the entire hall to collapse. How could he possibly admit to a matter like that before his old acquaintance? Did he not want his pride anymore?

If he really came clean, that blabbermouth would surely spread it far and wide, and it would be a matter of hours before every soul in the Sanctum of Sages knew of his humiliation.

“In a moment of carelessness?” The elder scratched his head in confusion, and dust rained down from his hair.

“Alright, there’s no point talking about this matter anymore. Zhang shi over here intends to take the 8-star examination, so take him to the Steps of Formations!” Fearing that his old friend would continue pursuing the matter, Elder Su anxiously changed the topic at hand.

“He wants to take the 8-star examination too? Very well, follow me.” Nodding, the elder began leading Zhang Xuan away.

“Un.” Zhang Xuan and Chen Leyao quickly followed him.

Elder Su hesitated for a moment, but eventually, his gut feeling told him that it might not be safe to leave Zhang Xuan alone, so he decided to follow along as well.

After leaving the rubble, they walked for some time before a staircase came into view.

This staircase was extremely bizarre. There was nothing above or below supporting it, and it simply floated off the ground, ascending straight into the sky, as if leading to a heavenly palace of some sort.

“What’s this?” Zhang Xuan asked curiously.

He could tell that there were many formations inscribed on each of the steps of the staircase and in the surroundings in order to allow them to float. Nevertheless, it was still

a rather impressive feat.

“This is what we call the Steps of Formations, and this is where we conduct the formation master examination!” the elder explained with a chuckle.

“Steps of Formations?”

“Un. Every single step here contains a unique formation, be it Illusory Formation, Slaughter Formation, Beguilement Formation, and many others. Some of them even require one to set up a formation in order to decipher it. All in all, there are ninety steps here, and every ten steps is equivalent to the increment of a star in rank,” the elder explained.

“As long as you can reach the 80th floor, that will mean that you have cleared the 8-star formation master examination!”

Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

In a sense, this was similar to the Sea of Formations that he had encountered previously. Basically speaking, the formation master had to display their prowess through

overcoming all sorts of formations that stood in their way in order to clear the examination.

Once the examinee reached a certain mark, that would signify that they had cleared the examination.

Also, depending on where the examinee had stopped, that could also be used to determine how far had their mastery of formations had reached. For example, reaching the 75th step would mean that they had achieved the proficiency equivalent to a 7-star high-tier formation master.

Of course, this examination was clearly at a different level to the Sea of Formations. Some of the formations even required one to set up a formation in order to clear. It would be highly testing on one's state of mind, creativity, and knowledge of formations.

Even for Zhang Xuan, this examination could pose quite a bit of a challenge.

While the both of them were still chatting, Chen Leyao could not help but ask, "Elders, may I ask if those standing on the steps are all challenging the examination too?"

Taking another look, Zhang Xuan realized that there was a total of five people standing on the staircase.

These students did not continue heading up. Instead, each of them was standing atop a step. Their eyes were tightly shut, almost as if they were in a daze or in the midst of deep contemplation. Or maybe, they were already consumed by the formation, unable to struggle free.

"Indeed, they are currently challenging the formation, too!" Elder Su nodded. "Two are taking the 5-star and 7-star examinations, and one is taking the 8-star examination!"

Zhang Xuan took a closer look and noted that two of the students were standing on steps in the forties, two on steps in the sixties, and one on steps in the seventies.

After a moment, Zhang Xuan asked curiously, "The King of Destruction you spoke of earlier must be the highest student up there, right?"

He had heard from the elder who barged in earlier that the King of Destruction had not completed his examination yet. Given so, it would make sense for the latter to still be on top.

Previously, Elder Su had said that the King of Destruction was intending to take the 8-star formation master examination as well, just like him, so by deduction, he would be the one in the seventies.

Elder Su harrumphed in displeasure. “Indeed, that’s him!”

Who in the world would like to be around someone who could cause massive devastation all of a sudden?

Intrigued, Zhang Xuan took a closer look at the King of Destruction and noted that he was a young man who seemed to be in his thirties. His figure looked a little slim and slender, and he was dressed in a light gray robe. As the other party’s back was facing him, he was unable to make out his facial features, but he could vaguely feel a cold and lofty aura emanating from him.

Zhang Xuan did a swift calculation before remarking with a smile, “He seems to be on the 79th step. I wonder if he will be able to take the final step forward.”

In this moment, all the steps suddenly began shaking wildly, as if a rampaging beast had crashed heavily onto it.

“The hell, the King of Destruction is attempting to destroy our Steps of Formations! Hurry up and stop him!” an anxious voice yelled.

Shortly after hearing those words, Zhang Xuan suddenly realized that there were a couple more elders sitting by the staircase, and they were dressed similarly to Elder Su. Most likely, they were the other elders dispatched to keep the King of Destruction in check.

The elder who had shouted earlier had an anxious look on his face, and as he spoke, he quickly gathered zhenqi in his palm and pumped it into the staircase before him, seemingly attempting to stabilize the Steps of Formations.

Unfortunately, there were simply too many formations on the steps. As powerful as that formation was, he was not strong enough to stabilize the entire structure by himself.

“What are you all waiting for? Hurry up and help out!”

In this moment, Elder Su could not pay attention to Zhang Xuan any longer. He quickly flew forth and pumped his zhenqi into the Steps of Formations as well.

With six powerful formation masters making a move simultaneously, the staircase’s shaking did lessen. However, in this moment, the young man on the 79th step suddenly opened his eyes and lifted his leg. Just as he was about to step on the 80th step, the steps beneath his feet finally reached their limits.

Hong long!

With a resounding explosion, everything collapsed. Countless formations flew across the air, causing the spiritual energy in the surroundings to fall into chaos.

“This…” Zhang Xuan gulped subconsciously. “He really is the King of Destruction!”

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